

Determinate variation, by Dr. Chas. O. Whitman, of the University of Chicago; the isolation factor, by Dr. David Starr Jordan, of Stanford University; evolution and psychology, by Dr. G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University.

At night on Friday, January 1, a Darwin memorial dinner was given, attended by about 300 naturalists. Following the dinner, addresses were given by Dr. W. H. Welch, on the debt of medicine to Darwin; by Dr. Albrecht Penck, on the geographical factor in evolution; and by Prof. E. B. Poulton, on Darwin's life and character. Prof. Poulton was particularly happy in his address, and his visit to America at this time and for this purpose was a great gratification to all the members of the American Association. At the close of the dinner a congratulatory telegram was sent to Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace.

The association decided to meet in Boston during convocation week, 1909-10, and the following plans were laid for future meetings: 1910-11, Minneapolis; summer of 1910, Honolulu; 1911-12, Washington; 1912-13, Cleveland; 1913-14, Toronto. The following officers for the coming year were elected:—

President: David Starr Jordan, Stanford University; *Vice-presidents:* Section A, E. W. Brown, of Yale University; Section B, L. A. Bauer, of Carnegie Institution; Section C, Wm. McPherson, of Ohio State University; Section D, J. F. Hayford, of U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey; Section E, R. W. Brock, director of the Geological Survey of Canada; Section F, W. E. Ritter, of University of California; Section G, D. P. Penhallow, of McGill University; Section H, Wm. H. Holmes, of Bureau of Ethnology; Section I, Carroll D. Wright, of Clark College; Section K, C. S. Minot, of Harvard University; Section L, James E. Russell, of Columbia University; *General Secretary:* Dayton C. Miller, of Cleveland; *Secretary of the Council:* F. G. Benedict, of Carnegie Institution.

Among the resolutions of general interest passed by the council were one protesting against special legislation against vivisection; another requesting Congress to do away with tariff on scientific books, instruments, and apparatus; and a third requesting Congress to enlarge the scope of the National Bureau of Education.

Much pleasure was expressed during the meeting at the very courteous action of the British Association in making the officers of the American Association honorary members for the coming Winnipeg meeting, and in offering to the fellows and members of the American Association membership in the British Association for the meeting on the same terms as old members of the British Association, including the receipt of the report of proceedings of the meeting. It seems certain that there will be a large attendance of members of the American Association at the Winnipeg meeting.

THE PROMOTION OF RESEARCH.¹

THE question of the promotion of research is one which makes a very direct appeal to scientific men, most of whom have at some time or other been confronted with the difficulties raised by it. In a little volume which has reached us a scheme is outlined for the promotion of scientific research, under which public money may be awarded to persons making discoveries prescribed by Parliament. According to the scheme, any person who has made such a discovery may apply for a grant, the application being accompanied by a specification of the discovery. The specification is examined for formalities and for novelty of subject-matter, and afterwards all the specifications accepted in one year are submitted to an investigation

as to the nature and novelty of all the discoveries for that year, grants being then made in relation to the discoveries which comply with the terms prescribed by Parliament.

It will be seen from this brief statement of the scheme that it bears a close resemblance to the grant of Letters Patent to inventors, and, in fact, the scheme is based on the Patents Acts. The patent law enables an inventor to obtain a grant, not of money, but of a monopoly, for a limited time, and by somewhat similar procedure the scheme enables a person making a discovery prescribed by Parliament to obtain a grant, not of a monopoly, but of money. There can, unfortunately, be no doubt that many discoverers have hitherto met with very inadequate remuneration, and that some have not been recognised at all. While it is doubtful whether the establishment of such a scheme would enable discoverers to be remunerated adequately, it would certainly provide for the recognition by the State of "true and first discoverers," and to this extent at least would diminish injustice and encourage scientific research. It might also exert a powerful, though indirect, effect on manufacture, for if such a scheme had been established, and if Parliament had prescribed, say, discoveries relating to glass for optical instruments, how different might have been the position to-day of English manufacturers of optical instruments.

The adoption of such a scheme could without doubt be utilised to accelerate the solution of some of the important problems of physical and chemical science, and many of the life and death problems of medical and biological science.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SOCIOLOGY AND RELIGION OF THE ANDAMANESE.

THE inhabitants of the Andaman Islands have long been recognised as one of the most primitive races of mankind. By their geographical position and their ferocity towards strangers, they were practically isolated from the rest of the world until 1858. The tribes of the Great Andaman, which constitute by far the largest part of the whole race, are rapidly diminishing in numbers, and are fast forgetting their ancient lore; the next half-century will witness their entire extinction. It was thus highly desirable that a full investigation should be made of these interesting pygmies before it was too late. Through the labours of Mr. E. H. Man and the publications of Sir Richard Temple and Mr. M. V. Portman, a good deal was known concerning the general life of the people, their language, and other subjects, more particularly those of the southern tribes of the Great Andaman. Owing to recent developments in the studies of comparative sociology and religion, it was desirable that Mr. Man's observation should be confirmed and extended.

When the Board of Anthropological Studies in Cambridge was entrusted with the selection of the first Anthony Wilkin student, it had no hesitation in appointing Mr. A. R. Brown, of Trinity College, to undertake this important investigation. He started for the Andamans at the end of August, 1906, and spent two dry seasons of six months each at his field work in the jungles of the Andaman Islands. Mr. Brown was able to confirm a great deal of what Mr. Man had written concerning the southern tribes and to supplement this by a thorough study of the northern tribes of the Great Andaman.

Measurements on the living subjects prove the Andamanese to be a very homogeneous race, with little variation and a strongly marked racial type. In

¹ "A Scheme for the Promotion of Scientific Research." By Walter B. Priest. 2nd edition. Pp. iv+64. (London: Stevens and Sons, 1908.)

their social structure and magical and religious beliefs they are the most primitive people who have yet been systematically studied. The Australians, so often spoken of as very primitive people, have well-developed totemic and local organisations, a classificatory system of kinship names, and elaborate systems of myths and magical beliefs. The Andamanese have no system of clans, but live in small hordes having little cohesion. Their system of kinship terms appears to be antecedent to the classificatory system. Their myths and magical beliefs are equally simple and undeveloped.

The Little Andamans are still left for future investigation, although Mr. Brown spent three and a half months with these wild islanders. As, however, there was no interpreter, the amount of progress which he made in learning their language was insufficient to enable him to pursue the investigation of their sociology and religion, but he has recorded their material culture.

A. C. HADDON.

NOTES.

THE third annual general meeting of the British Science Guild will be held at the Mansion House to-morrow, January 22, at 4 p.m., under the presidency of the Lord Mayor. Mr. Haldane, president of the Guild, will address the meeting, and will be supported by Sir W. Ramsay, K.C.B., F.R.S., Sir F. Pollock, Bart., Sir Aston Webb, R.A., Sir Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., Sir Boverton Redwood, Dr. Bovey, and other speakers.

WE see with deep regret the announcement that Dr. Francis Elgar, F.R.S., whose scientific and practical work in naval architecture is of world-wide renown, died suddenly on January 17 at sixty-three years of age.

THE British Association will meet in Winnipeg from August 25 to September 1 of this year. The president-elect is Sir J. J. Thomson, F.R.S.; and the following sectional presidents have just accepted office:—A (Mathematical and Physical Science), Prof. E. Rutherford, F.R.S.; B (Chemistry), Prof. H. E. Armstrong, F.R.S.; C (Geology), Dr. A. Smith Woodward, F.R.S.; D (Zoology), Dr. A. E. Shipley, F.R.S.; E (Geography), Sir Duncan A. Johnston, K.C.M.G.; F (Economic Science and Statistics), Prof. S. J. Chapman; G (Engineering), Sir William H. White, K.C.B., F.R.S.; H (Anthropology), Prof. J. L. Myres; I (Physiology), Prof. E. H. Starling, F.R.S.; K (Botany), Lieut.-Colonel D. Prain, F.R.S.; L (Educational Science), Dr. H. B. Gray; and subsection, Agriculture, Major P. G. Craigie (chairman). A handbook of preliminary information, drawn up by the local executive committee, may be obtained from the office of the British Association, Burlington House, London, W., or will be sent to applicants enclosing 2½d. for postage.

A SUM of 20,000l. has been placed in the hands of the trustees of the medical school of the London Hospital to be invested to the best advantage, and the income from it to be expended in the advancement of medical research and the promotion of higher education in medicine. The administrators are the chairman, Mr. Sydney Holland, and two members of the acting staff of the hospital. It has been settled that the money is to be spent on increasing the facilities for research, and not for the routine teaching of candidates for examination. The benefits derived from the gift will not be confined to those students educated at the London Hospital, but will be open to qualified medical men from any part of the British Empire who are willing to give up their time to advancing medical knowledge within the walls of the London Hospital or

college. The donor of this munificent gift desires to remain anonymous, in the hope that the fund which he has thus started will be added to by others, and that in time it may become of such magnitude as to be of great use to the present and to all future generations in the fight against and the prevention of, disease.

AN interesting summary by Dr. H. R. Mill of the rainfall of the British Isles in 1908 appeared in the *Times* of January 16. The discussion is only a preliminary one, containing results of observations at ninety representative stations, and comparisons with the average of the last thirty years. A complete discussion of the data will appear later in "British Rainfall," but the author remarks, "the laborious re-computation from all the data ultimately available rarely shows the preliminary estimates to be much in error, though, of course, greater detail becomes possible." The production of the present summary in so short a time reflects great credit on the promptitude of the voluntary observers and on the staff of the British Rainfall Organisation. The figures show that the year was technically dry; the following are the percentages of the average for the general rainfall:—England, S., 86; Wales, 95; England, N., 91; Scotland, 98; Ireland, 101; British Isles, 93. The monthly values are, of course, much more variable than the annual; the author summarises them as follows:—"The collective rainfall of the country was above the average from March to the end of September. The dry October brought it back to the average, the dry November greatly reduced it, but a really wet December would have made it up in the end; and even with the moderately dry December the final deficiency, as has been shown, was not very great." June was very dry in England, but less so in other parts. The rainfall for London (Camden Square) was 23.67 inches, an inch and a half below the thirty years' average; but, the author remarks, London is a large place; the general average of the district ranges from about 23 inches in the low-lying parts near the river to at least 27 inches on the encircling girdle of hills.

M. ANTONY POINCARÉ has been elected president, and MM. Eiffel and Maillet vice-presidents, of the French Meteorological Society.

DR. SVEN HEDIN arrived at Stockholm on January 17, and had an audience of the King of Sweden, who presented him with the Grand Cross of the Polar Star. He will give an account of his recent expedition in Tibet at a special meeting of the Royal Geographical Society to be held in the Queen's Hall on February 8.

It is announced in the *Chemist and Druggist* that Baron Bessières has left a legacy of 3200l. to the Pasteur Institute, Paris, to be employed in scientific researches in accordance with special instructions he has left with his executor.

THE seventieth birthday of Prof. G. Lunge will be celebrated on September 15, and a local committee has undertaken to arrange a suitable commemoration of the occasion. Chemists who desire to be associated with this festival should communicate with Dr. E. Berl, Zürich IV, Sonneggstrasse 84.

THE council of the Institution of Civil Engineers, after consideration of the papers on Indian engineering subjects published in the Proceedings for the past session, has awarded the "Indian premium" of the institution for 1908, of the value of 33l., to Mr. F. P. Anderson, for his paper on river control by wire net-work.